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JOURNAL OF SYNAGOGUE MUSIC, *Volume VII*, Number 2  
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A UNIQUE CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF  
THE AMERICAN CANTORATE (II)

MAX WOHLBERG

***Dr. Wohlberg concludes his record of “a short-lived attempt of a number of hazzanim, in the last years of the 30’s, to re-fashion the character of the cantorate in America and to divert its course into new channels.”***

***The first half of this short history appeared in the last issue of the JOURNAL OF SYNAGOGUE MUSIC (November 1976/Heshvan 5737) and took the Cantors’ Ministers Cultural Organization from its birth, late in 1938, through a bit more than a year of genuine effort, controversy, opposition and some small success, and concluding with an outstanding concert in memory of Solomon Sulzer on the 50th anniversary of his death.***

***For the benefit of readers who may not have had an opportunity to read the first half of this interesting record we reprint here the author’s short preface.***

***S.R.***

I hope that in the not too distant future an exhaustive history of ***haxxanut*** will be compiled. In the meantime the significant role of the American cantor awaits its chronicler.

What follows here is an attempt to recall and to describe events relating to the early efforts of a few cantors who wished to refashion the character of the cantorate in America and to divert its course into new channels.

Notwithstanding the small number of pioneers, the result was a vibrant, though short-lived, organization with which both David Putterman and I (later, also Saul Meisels) had become associated.

Since I had served as its recording secretary I have preserved the minutes of its sessions. David Putterman had been asked to

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**Dr. Max Wohlberg is Professor of Nusah at the Cantors Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary, and a frequent contributor of articles on Jewish music.**

organize for our study sessions and I am indebted to him for copies of his correspondence with a number of well-known educators. David and I had been serving neighboring congregations. His was in Washington Heights, mine in Inwood.

In lieu of a preface, it seems proper to state that during the thirties the preponderant number of cantors in New York and its environs were members of the Farband. Unfortunately, the Farband saw fit to open its ranks to even such as were but remotely related to *haxxanut*, so long as they were willing to pay dues. As a result our colleagues included *shamoshim*, *shochtim*, *melamdin*, *mashgichim*, *mohelim*, kosher-delicatessen clerks and whoever functioned or aspired to function as a hazzan for as few as three days a year.

Jacob Rapaport, an eminently able man, presided over the destinies of the Farband. He ruled with an iron fist and in a dictatorial manner. Some of us pointed out the needs for cultural and musical activities. Our suggestions, however, were, as a rule, met with condescending derision. "After all," we were repeatedly reminded, "all one needs is the ability to '*derlang*' (deliver)". But slowly the circle of the dissatisfied grew and thus was laid the foundation for the cantors cultural organization.

Note should also be taken of several other factors : The nation was suffering from the effects of a severe economic depression. The "Chazanim Farband," through the "Gewerkshafte" (Hebrew Trades Union) joined the American Federation of Labor. Finally, the need for a school for the training of cantors acquired an ever greater number of proponents.

The final meeting of the Farband before joining the American Federation of Labor was indeed a stormy standing-room only affair. Only two spoke against joining the union: Glantz and this writer. When the votes (taken by secret ballot) were counted there was only one vote "against". Glantz abstained.

Incidentally, the future historian of the cantorate in America should try to obtain minutes of the Farband. When I became its recording secretary I found no recorded minutes. My first act was to purchase two large, cloth-bound volumes in which I recorded, in Yiddish, the proceedings of the general as well as board meetings. Years later, my successor, N. Saravaisky, continued to record faithfully all that transpired at these sessions.

Business Meeting, February 21, 1940

Glantz — Chairman

Wohlberg reports on Sulzer Memorial Meeting.

Chairman reports that thanks of our organization were sent to Congregation Sharei Zedek, Rabbi Goldberg, L. Saminsky and Roitman. He expresses appreciation to Schwartz, Katchko, Jassinowsky, Beimel, Ringel, Erstling and Wohlberg.

Schwartz deplors the mistakes made in the printing of program and in the publicity. Wohlberg attributes these to the last-minute rush.

In the absence of Putterman, Chairman of our School Committee, Wohlberg reports that it is proposed that the courses to be given for our members begin on March 4th and end on May 20th 1940.

Sherman, Schwartz, Meisels, Goldenberg, Wohlberg, Postolow, Greenblatt, Glantz, Kwartin, Steinberg and Brodsky discuss proposals for courses which are then accepted unanimously. Details are referred to School Committee, which — with Presidium and Board of Directors, is to select instructors.

Ringel asks all to fill out application blanks and to pay dues.

Glantz reports on the meeting of our committee with the committee of the Farband discussing amalgamation.

It is decided to meet again with that committee for discussion on the proposal of forming a Board or Presidium to consist of one member of each existing cantorial organization and to have a larger Board of Directors made up of three representatives from each.

Glantz proposes the creation of ensembles for performing the compositions of such old masters of hazzanut as : Belzer, Rovner etc. He also favors the institution of compositions in various forms.

Kwartin urges the founding of his proposed ***“Chov’vei Chazanim.”***

Goldberg suggests we invite a recent refugee who collected many records of prominent (now deceased) European cantors and have some of these played at one of our meetings.

A committee consisting of Schwartz, Brodsky, Kritchmar, Steinberg and Roitman is appointed for Kwartin’s ***“Chov’vei Chazanim”*** and for other fund raising activities.

Congratulations are extended to Postolow upon his engagement in a prominent Brooklyn synagogue. Katchko proposed that a congratulatory letter be sent to his congregation.

In connection with the planned courses, Putterman corresponded with a number of would-be instructors.

I am indebted to him for this correspondence. By coincidence the following three letters bear the same date: Feb. 27, 1940.

My Dear Mr. Putterman ;

The invitation you kindly extended to me honors me but to my deepest regret I am not able to accept it. Several reasons, not the least — my health, prevent me from assuming the task of such a course of lectures. At the moment I would not be able to give even one single of these lectures, maybe later on I will be in the position to offer one single lecture.

With best regards,

Very sincerely yours,  
Ismar Elbogen

(This renowned author's "*Der Juedische Gottesdienst*" is now available in Hebrew Translation.)

My dear Rev. Putterman :

In reply to your letter of February 26th, I wish to inform you that I am available on Monday afternoons and I shall be glad to arrange with you the lecture courses on Elementary Theory and Rudiments of Harmony to which you refer.

It would be most convenient for me to see you at my place either tomorrow (Wednesday) or Thursday afternoon for discussing the details of the arrangement. May I ask you to call me upon the receipt of this letter, so that we may make a definite appointment for our meeting.

With kindest regards, I am

Very sincerely yours  
Joseph Yasser

(Yasser, an eminent musician and true savant, is the author of the highly original and challenging "A Theory of Evolving Tonality.")

To The Renowned Chazan R. David Putterman,

I truly rejoiced reading in your letter that you are planning to arrange for lessons in our language and literature and was flattered that you selected me as instructor.

However, to my regret, time does not permit me to get involved in this holy task neither for remuneration or in its absence.

I, therefore, suggest that you invite the well-known poet Abraham Regelson. He possesses two advantages: He is a master of English, and he has a wife and five children to support with insufficient means. If help will be needed, I will always be available for any teacher of Hebrew you will choose.

With esteem and blessings  
Daniel Persky

(The above is a translation from the original Hebrew. Its author is the famous grammarian and outstanding stylist and historian of Hebrew literature. He was my teacher of **dikduk** at the Herzliah where, incidentally, Moshe Nathanson introduced us to the songs of reborn Israel. As a result of this letter, Putterman immediately got in touch with Regelson and arranged for five one-hour sessions in Hebrew Language.)

Meeting of Board of Directors, Feb. 29, 1940

Glantz – Chairman

It is announced that Prof. Arthur Wolf of Vienna will speak on voice culture at our next general meeting.

Putterman reports on courses which are scheduled at Anshei Chesed on March 11, 1940. Instructors are to be: Yasser : Theory and Harmony ; Regelson : Hebrew ; Dr. J. Krengel : Liturgy (one lecture by Elbogen) ; Beimel : Nuschaot ; B. Kwartin : Voice ; Zilberts : Improvisation ; Goldenberg : **Dinei Tefillah**.

Report accepted unanimously.

(During the week prior to the inauguration of the courses an ad appeared in the Yiddish press indicating the seven areas to be covered by the distinguished instructors. The sessions, it was emphasized, will be opened to all cantors, regardless of membership. Those seeking further information were advised to contact Putterman at his home or at Anshei Chesed. Finally, a list of officers and directors was added. On March 1, 1940, the following letter was mailed to our members :)

Dear Colleague :

We offer you an opportunity to avail yourself of a series of 12 Monday afternoon (from 2 to 5 P.M.) lecture courses for cantors, commencing Monday, March 11, promptly at 2 P.M. in the Cantor's Study of Temple Anshei Chesed, 100th St. and West End Ave. New York City.

The courses are as follows :

1. Hazzanut :

- |  |   |              |
|--|---|--------------|
| a) <b>Neginot and Teamim</b>                     | } | Jacob Beimel |
| b) <b>Nuschaot and Modes</b>                     |   |              |
| c) Improvisation and Recitative : Zavel Zilberts |   |              |

## 2. Music:

- a) Elementary Theory
  - b) Rudiments of Harmony
  - c) Voice Training : Bernard Kwartin
- } Joseph Yasser

## 3. Hebrew:

- a) History of Liturgy — Prof. Ismar Elbogen and  
Dr. Johannes Krengel
- b) ***Dinei Tefillah***: Asher Goldenberg
- c) Hebrew Language : Abraham Regelson

We are privileged with a faculty of well-known authorities in each respective subject. The classes will be divided in three sessions, of one hour each, every Monday afternoon and will be classified as the study of 1) Hazzanut. 2) Music and 3) Hebrew.

The fee to members of our organization for all the lecture courses for the 3 subjects will be \$6.00 or \$2.00 per subject. For non-members \$9.00 for all courses, or \$3.00 per subject.

Please register on the enclosed card and return it without delay.

Sincerely

David Putterman,

Chairman, Committee on Education

I. Ringel, Secretary

(Return-card enclosed)

Cultural Meeting — March 6, 1940 at Steinway Hall

Katchko — Chairman

The Chairman stresses the importance of vocal control for cantors and introduces Prof. Arthur Wolf who speaks on the causes of and cures for vocal abuse.

March 13, 1940

Dear Mr. Putterman ;

I was sorry to hear that you had to postpone the classes to the early fall, and the more so, as I had prepared my first lecture. But it will surely not lose its flavor till that time, "Neither its taste nor its aroma will change" [The last sentence is translated from the Hebrew].

I would be thankful to you, if you would have the kindness to recommend me occasionally for lectures, sermons, instruction in talmud etc.

Yours very truly,  
Rabbi Dr. John Krengel



Board of Directors Meeting on March 27, 1940

Putterman reports on the poor response of our members to the planned courses. He also informs us that because of the few applicants he notified Messrs. Regelson, Yasser, Zilberts and Kregel that due to the lateness of the season their courses are postponed for the fall.

On recommendation of Putterman it is decided to limit our courses to 24 (instead of 36) lectures. Students will be informed of these changes.

As Chairman of Membership Committee, Putterman reports that, as of today, the following have fulfilled requirements for Membership : Roitman, B. Kwartin, Brodsky, S. P. Postolow, Kritchmar, Wohlberg, Putterman, Glantz, Goldenberg, Kwartin, Katchko, Schwartz, H. Greenblatt, Beimel, D. M. Steinberg, M. Weisfield and Ringel. These are accepted.

It is decided to ask again those who have not yet filled out their application blanks to do so immediately.

Board of Directors Meeting on April 1, 1940

Glantz — Chairman

Putterman bemoans the fact that some of our members are involved in establishing a Cantors Seminary in seeming competition to our own courses (see note below) and that some of our leading members are soloists at concerts of the Farband.

Kwartin sees no reason why our members should not sing solos at Farband concerts. Wohlberg, Steinberg, Roitman and Ephros are of the same opinion. Katchko, Brodsky, Ringel, Glantz and Goldenberg speak in opposition.

Putterman moves to forbid our members to be soloists at concerts arranged by other organizations of cantors. Kwartin believes this move would cause friction. (It is not clear from my minutes whether a vote was taken.)

Schwartz announces that he withdraws from teaching in the new so-called, Cantors Conservatory.

It is decided that no member of our organization is to give commercial endorsements in the newspapers, unless it is for a musical, literary or art event.

A motion is made that our Board looks with disfavor on those of our members who assist morally or materially, private institutions purporting to be genuine national conservatories.

A letter received from the Farband will be submitted to our general meeting.

(Note : The following advertisement appeared in the Yiddish Press :)

CHAZANIM CONSERVATORY OF AMERICA

will open at the

Metropolitan Opera House Studios

on Monday, March 25th

under the auspices of the two prominent leaders Pinchos Jassinowsky and Louis Lipitz (past President of Chazanim Farband).

A modern Institution for all phases of Chazanut

Curriculum :

- 1) **Chaxanut-Nusach**, Modes and Improvisation. Modern, Orthodox, Conservative and Reform. Teachers: P. Jassinowsky and L. Lipitz.
- 2) Music — Theory, Solfeggio, Harmony and Composition. Teachers: Prof. Jacob Weinberg and Madam Jassinowsky.
- 3) Hebrew — **Dinei Tefilah, Minhagim**, Cantillation, History of Liturgy. Teachers : A. Regelson, A. Wolitzky and A. Goldenberg.
- 4) Voice Culture — Maestro Arturo Vita.
- 5) Choral singing, Elocution, English: Prof. Herbert L. Hekes.

The aim of the institute is to systematize **chaxanut** and to prepare chazanim for the current scene. Talented young men with good Jewish background should apply for interviews and free examinations to the office of the Chazanim Conservatory (closed on Saturday and Sunday) at the

Metropolitan Opera Studios

1425 Broadway Phone : Pen. 6-2634, Ext. 47

Business Meeting on April 3, 1940

Glantz — Chairman

Minutes read and corrected.

Glantz and Wohlberg report favorably on courses. The meeting heartily endorses the conduct of courses and decides to secure weekly notices in the press regarding them.

The recommendations of the Board of Directors, not to assist or associate with individual cantors, conservatories and not to give commercial endorsements are accepted. Our members will be notified of this decision.

The motion of the Board to forbid our members to be soloists at concerts of other cantorial organizations is accepted.

The Board of Directors is authorized to discuss the proposal of Mr. Goldberg of the Brooklyn Jewish Center to arrange an illustrated concert, at that institution, whereby we may benefit financially.

The Board will arrange for the organization of ensembles.

Congratulations are extended to Kritchmar and Katchko.

Board of Directors Meeting – April 10, 1940

Glantz – Chairman

The Chairman reports on the decisions made at our last meeting. In connection with our suggested ensembles, he reports, Leo Low was approached and his reply was favorable. The Board is pleased with the choice. However, further inquiries will be made.

Our Cultural Meeting on April 17th will feature illustrations of the three (*Magen Avot*, *Yekum Purkan* and *Ahavah Rabba*) modes. Two selections in each mode will be sung by six chazanim. Glantz, Steinberg and Kwartin will represent the Orthodox tradition while Brodsky, Katchko and Putterman will portray the Conservative style. Goldenberg will introduce the program.

Board of Directors Meeting on May 9, 1940.

The Presidium is authorized to investigate the commercial endorsements, given by some of our members, in spite of our previous decision not to do so, and to report back to the Board.

Since Roitman, Hyman and Postolow were soloists at a Farband concert it is decided, by majority vote, to telephone these men and remind them of our ruling in this matter. Roitman will be asked to appear before us tomorrow.

It is decided to send out letters to our members, with return-cards enclosed, asking them to join an ensemble, sponsored by us, under the direction of Leo Low.

Motion is made by Schwartz to conclude our season with a social get-together where the presentation of our charter will take place.

General Meeting on June 27, 1940

The Chairman, Glantz, reports that notwithstanding the critical world-situation which retarded, somewhat, our progress we accomplished a great deal, such as the 24 study sessions, lectures by Sandberg and others as well as the Idelsohn and Sulzer memorial meetings.

General thanks are expressed to the Chairman, members of the Presidium and officers, for their work during the past year.

Elections take place.

(Here end my own notes. The following was, I believe, written by Harold Greenblatt who gave it to me.)

Jassinowsky proposes to re-elect all officers, to ask them to work with more fervor and to change the Chairman every three months.

Erstling objects. Katchko charges dictatorship.

Unanimous vote to have our President and two others as members of the Presidium.

Glantz, Kwartin and Katchko are nominated for the Presidium ;

Schwartz and Roitman for Treasurer ;

Ringel for Financial Secretary ;

Wohlberg respectfully and definitely declines to accept office for 1940-1. A vote of thanks is extended to him for his splendid work and co-operation, while regret is voiced, for his declination.

Friedman and Greenblatt are nominated for off ice of Recording Secretary. The latter, with the proviso that he withdraws from the Farband. Greenblatt is elected and promises to resign his office at Farband.

For the Board of Directors the following are elected: Beimel, Brodsky, Ephros, Erstling, Friedman, Goldenberg, Hershman, Jassinowsky, Kritchmar, Meisels, Putterman, Roitman, Steinberg and Wohlberg.

A letter from the Farband is read asking us to appoint a committee of three to meet with similar committees of the other cantorial organizations to discuss the welfare of our profession.

Erstling is opposed to such a committee. Katchko and Schwartz are in favor.

It is decided that the Presidium appoint such a committee, which is to include Erstling.

Glantz reproaches Roitman for taking part in a concert of the Farband and threatens imposing fines in order to establish discipline. Schwartz suggests that Roitman should pay for the refreshments at our next meeting. A fine of five dollars is voted.

Glantz voices a complaint against Kritchmar, Ringel and Erstling for permitting their names to be used in commercial ads. The latter maintains that he offered \$25.00 for the agency to drop his name, from the ad, but his offer was refused.

Friedman stresses the evils of our involvement in such cheap publicity. Schwartz proposes expulsion for those breaching our rules.

Jassinowsky suggests that each of the three violators be fined five dollars. His suggestion is accepted.

My notes on the Cantors Cultural Organization end at this point. Although its membership consisted of less than 75 cantors it did include most men of prominence residing in or near New York.

In addition to those, whose names appear more or less frequently in the minutes quoted above, its roster includes — among others : M. Adolf, Bashkowitz, Kaplow, Brockman, Eskowitz, Gertler, Ganchoff, Hyman, Kalish, Kahan, Lowy, Lange, Z. Margolies, Oppenheim, Perle, J. Rapaport, Robyn, A. J. Rose, Rosofsky, A. Shapiro, A. I. Sherman, Schram, Saitz, Vigoda, R. Tucker, Yavneh, A. J. Wohlberg (an uncle of this writer), M. Nathanson, S. Meisels, Weisser and Zaslavsky.

Since, as I believe, civilization begins with history, our concern with this organization, as a unique phenomenon, is a legitimate one.

In retrospect, I would attribute its decline to two factors. Decisions, and particularly their implementation, were made on a too-narrow basis. Glantz was inclined to exert too great a pressure for which few cared or could oppose. and 2) the organization had no national aspirations. It thus remained a local organization, catering to the needs (or pretentions) of a few.

Perhaps a third reason, was even more decisive. Since its chief concern, was the dissemination of culture, a not easily digested diversion, while it scrupulously avoided problems related to positions and to economics, its attraction diminished gradually.

It would be worthwhile to locate Harold Greenblatt, a man of talent, who succeeded me as Recording Secretary to find out if he could shed light on the final period of this organization. According to information I received some years ago, Greenblatt was on the music faculty of some college or university.

In 1941, I left New York for Minneapolis, where I remained for four years. I believe, that in the same year, Glantz left for Los Angeles. But, at least in the beginning of that year, the Cantors Ministers Cultural Organization functioned as attested to by the following letter dated, Jan. 8, 1941.

Dear Colleague :

Once again we offer you an opportunity to avail yourself of a series of 12 Monday afternoon lecture courses for cantors, from 3 to 5 P.M., commencing Monday, Jan. 20th promptly at 3 P.M., in the Cantor's study of Temple Anshei Chesed, 100th Street and West End Ave., New York City.

The courses are as follows :

- Liturgy ..... by Prof. Elbogen or Dr. Kregel  
Study of history of liturgy
- Hebrew .....by Abraham Regelson  
Study of Hebrew language
- Music ..... by Joseph Yasser  
General knowledge of music for the needs of cantors
- Hazzanut* .....by Jacob Beigel
- a. Review of lectures of last semester
  - b. *Nuschaot*
  - c. Analysis of cantorial compositions
  - d. Congregational singing
  - e. Requisites for choral groups

The classes will be divided into two one-hour sessions, classified under the above 1 and 2 groupings.

The fee to our members will be \$4 for all the courses, or \$2 per grouping. For non-members, but those who are qualified cantors, \$6 for all the courses, or \$3 per grouping.

Please register for your courses on the enclosed card and mail it *without delay*.

Sincerely,  
David Putterman, Chairman  
Committee on Education

The need for a school for the training of cantors did not automatically burgeon from the cantorial organizations. The idea needed years for fermentation.

Unfortunately I have not recorded the date, but it was sometime between 1937 and 1940 that Putterman and I, accompanied (to the best of my recollection) by Beigel, Glantz and someone else, went to see Dr. Cyrus Adler (President of the Jewish Theological Seminary) regarding a school for cantors. He received us warmly, expressed agreement with our aims and promised to consider our request. His passing in 1940, was a serious loss to our cause.

The courses arranged by the Cultural Organization were an appropriate harbinger for the School of Sacred Music and for the Cantors Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary.

In assessing the accomplishments of the Cantors Ministers Cultural Organization, we are justified in crediting it with raising the cultural horizons of the cantorate and with being the forerunner of the most viable and vibrant cantorial organization: — The Cantors Assembly.

## THE SYNAGOGUE YOUTH CHOIR: AN EXPERIENCE IN EDUCATION

JEROME B. KOPMAR

Jewish educators have for years, tried to find ways and means to attract youngsters, to more meaningful and exciting ways of learning. Merely to put a child in a classroom and inundate him with facts and figures, has often proven to be a way to alienate, instead of drawing him closer. Of late, educators have come to accept the approach of educating through other means, such as drama, art and music. The approach of teaching Judaism, through means other than the traditional forms, is still frowned on by many an educator, but the fact, that other methods are a necessity is quickly, even if reluctantly, becoming accepted.

Perhaps, the approach that I will discuss, is one that will work only in a particular situation, and perhaps, the program to be discussed, is of a unique nature. However, I feel, to a smaller or larger degree, this method of educating can be useful. Of course, it is in no way intended that this method should totally negate the traditional forms of education; it is rather meant as an accompanying form. Both should go hand in hand.

The synagogue youth choir, if used properly, can be a marvelous tool for educating and not just as a performing tool. Perhaps my main premise is to educate, without making the child aware that he is being educated. It is a painless way of educating, and I like to refer to it, as educating through the back door. If we should tell children that we are going to study about the Sabbath and the holidays, or for that matter any subject, chances are very good, that unless the approach is an exciting one, they will be turned off in a very short time. However, should you teach a subject through a dynamic and meaningful musical expression, the student will have to absorb the meaning of the subject, without even realizing it.

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Hazzan Jerome Kopmar is a graduate of the Cantors Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and has been, for over a decade, the hazzan of Beth Abraham Synagogue in Dayton, Ohio. His work with young people choruses has gained him national recognition.



Yet before this can really be effective, it must be a prime goal to make the choir a thing of excellence. There must be a pride in the members, that will make it possible for them, to be able to accept a high degree of dedication, hard work and discipline, and not be turned off by it, I believe, that you can make a child do just about anything, provided that you make him believe, that what he is doing, will put him in a prestigious position. Young people like to identify with a successful venture, one, that will give them a great sense of pride, and make them feel special, among their peers. I see no difference in creating a feeling of excitement, within a youngster, that he will find in, say a winning athletic team, than by being part of, an excellent musical group. The pride, and marvelous sense of accomplishment, will be the same, as will his eager acceptance, to work hard, in order to attain it.

Let me cite some examples of educating, that I have experienced, with our youth chorale, that I think will explain my point.

The Holocaust has become an integral part, of the educational program, of most schools. We feel that it is important, that our youth be aware, of what befell our people, and hopefully, their realization and understanding of what happened, will prevent it, from occurring again. Many devices have been utilized in Holocaust education. There are films, books, articles, art works, and songs. By showing the student the horrors that took place, we hope that they will realize, if only minutely, the enormity of the tragedy that transpired. And yet, with all these tools at our disposal, I have rarely seen a youngster personally identify with the horrors of the Holocaust.

As one of our projects, a few years back, we prepared Charles Davidson's "I Never Saw Another Butterfly", in which he set to music the poems of the children of the Terezinstadt concentration camp. I don't want to comment on the musical values of the work, which I think are numerous, but rather on the educational impact it had on us. At first, I never stressed any of the educational points on the Holocaust, except in giving the work a general introduction, prior to working on it, I let the words and music speak for themselves. We were studying a musical work, like many other works we study, a work to practice until it is perfected and then performed. Yet, as we got more and more involved in the work, as the musical aspects became more perfected, I gradually began to emphasize, in more detail, the background of the texts, as part of my way of trying to improve the interpretation of the work.

Soon, it became more and more apparent to the kids, that the poems they were singing, weren't just ordinary poems. They began to realize, that these words were written by children, pretty much like themselves, but who were unfortunate enough, to live at a different time, and in a different place. It became apparent to them, that the children of Terezin were the same age as they, and their dreams and aspirations were remarkably, very similar. Slowly, the music began to take on a dimension, that took it beyond just another performance work. They began to sing it, as if they were the children of Terezin! They became more curious about who these children were, what possessed them to write such words, and what heinous conditions they had to live with, and the reasons that placed them in their situation. The Holocaust became a reality to them, in a manner like no other. Sure, they had seen the films of the Holocaust, they heard their parents and teachers talk about it, they dutifully attended many assemblies to commemorate it. But, for the first time in their lives, they were able to identify themselves with it.

We have since performed the work many times, and even recorded it, but never, have they been able to complete a performance, without becoming so involved, that they would cry — in spite of the many lectures I gave them, that in performance, their mission was to move the audience and not themselves. The Holocaust will never be the same to these children. To them, it is a very, real thing, since they feel a personal association, with the children of Terezin. They have adopted the children of “Butterfly” as their friends, and have committed themselves, to preserve their memory, by performing their poems as a memorial to them, and to the six million that perished with them.

“Butterfly” went beyond a musical experience. It became, a deeply, emotional and educational one as well, not only for them, but for the thousands that have heard them perform it. I don't think these youngsters will have to be reminded what the Holocaust was; neither will they have to be shown films to demonstrate its horrors. In a small way, they live through the torments of the Holocaust, every time they perform “Butterfly,” and it was through a musical experience that this realization came about.

Another example. This past year, our commissioned work was the High Holiday services. Like every other commission we have initiated, and we've had seven, in the past four years, our purpose, was to have a musical work created for us, that would serve not only our musical needs, but our educational ones as well.

The High Holiday liturgy is very complex, as we can all attest. The nusah isn't too familiar since it is heard, only once a year. In most cases, our youngsters are shunted off to a service, other than the main service, in which the music of the holidays, as well as the educational significance of the days, aren't as vivid, as they are in an adult service. As a result, our youngsters know very little about the High Holidays, both from the liturgical and musical standpoints. It was our intention to try to rectify this, as much as possible.

The work we commissioned, "The Days of Awe" by Sholom Kalib, contains the major selections from the High Holiday service from *Selihot* through *N'ila*. I wanted the work written in a very traditional style, not only because it is the style I personally prefer, and what I think the congregation prefers, but more importantly, I wanted the members of the chorale to experience a service, that is as traditionally authentic as possible, a work that they would associate, in their minds, as truly representative of no other occasion, than the High Holidays.

Once again, as with all our works, the initial intention conveyed to the chorale, was that we were preparing a work, that would be performed in concert. No mention was made, on my part, that it would also be a device, to teach the High Holidays, both musically and liturgically. Never did I mention, that it would be used as a synagogue work, as well. Our first responsibility, was to prepare the music, in a manner, that would coincide with our goals of perfection and high-level performance standards.

This time, I experimented with something that had only limited success. I prepared a study guide, of the music, discussing in detail, the music as well as the liturgical meanings. They were to keep this guide in their choir books and refer to it whenever they desired. They were also encouraged to take the material home and study it, but at no time, were they made to feel, that they were required to know, what was in the study guide. I just wanted to see what the results would be, if a written study text were given to them to study, on a voluntary basis, and to no surprise to myself, the guide was quickly discarded, and except for a few, it was only briefly referred to.

There is so much in the High Holiday liturgy that warrants study, that it would have taken forever to complete the music — 256 pages, as it was, if we went into great detail with all the texts. A general idea, of the meanings of the prayers, were given and, with some greater detail, stressed. I did put great emphasis on the ideals

contained within the liturgy, but all within the context of the musical preparation of the work.

Slowly, but most definitely, these youngsters began to attain a knowledge and understanding of the High Holidays and its liturgy that they could never have received in a classroom. The music brought the prayers to life, and no longer were they just cold words on unfamiliar pages, but rather, they became living ideas and expressions. As with all our music, it was memorized and thus these children now know huge sections of the *Machzor* by memory, not to speak of the *nusach* that they learned.

We even went a step further, and it was unquestionably a most important step. To learn the work as a concert service was good, but we decided to put the work where it belonged, in the synagogue. It was decided to have the chorale take part, with the cantor, at the services. In this manner, the youngsters would associate the music, within its proper domain, and not only in the concert hall. It would also give the chorale the experience of actually participating in the service. They would become relevant and viable parts of a service that ordinarily they would only be able to observe, if permitted to attend at all. The congregation was also telling the chorale, in effect, how important they are, by permitting them to be an integral part of the most important services of the year. There were many logistical problems, such as taking out two rows of seats in order to extend the *bimah* ten feet, so as to be able to accommodate the sixty-five member chorale. It was also necessary to abandon the use of the adult choir, that was normally used. On every matter we had the utmost backing from the congregation.

The experience was one that will never be forgotten. Even though we had grave fears, that the service might turn into a concert, it never did. The chorale sat on the *bimah* for each service, Selihot through *Musaf* of Yom *Kippur*, sometimes as long as three hours, with the utmost dignity and reverence. The great beauty of the service was unquestionable, but most important, and the point that gives us the most pride, is the unbelievable religious and educational experience it was, for the chorale. The High Holidays can never have the same meaning to these youngsters. For as long as they live, the High Holidays will have a personal and special meaning to them. The service came to life for them; they were the service, and along with the rabbi and cantor they shared in the responsibility of inspiring and bringing an entire congregation to a deep spiritual awareness of these Holy Days.

The following and final illustration is an experiment that we are presently in the process of trying, the success of which will have to be determined at a later date. I have a strong feeling, however, that it will work, and since it gives credance to our educational goals, I will discuss it.

This year, we are going to make the educational emphasis greater, and for the first time we are going to bring it through the front and not the back door. No longer are we going to disguise our educational intentions, but we are going to make it an open and integral part of the chorale program. We have reached the point in our development, where an open education policy will not frighten our members, and we believe, that they are now conditioned to want to learn and study as much as possible, as long as it is within the realm of their chorale experience.

This year's commission is, the Book of Ruth. It is a very beautiful book, that isn't ordinarily a part of the Hebrew school curriculum. An important part of the chorale's overall program is their participation in the *Shabbat* morning service on *Shabbat M'varchim*. Because of the size of the bimah, no more than forty members can be used on each *Shabbat*, although the chorale has a membership of eighty-five. We therefore choose forty members each month, on an alternating basis. In the past, only those that sang were required to attend the service. This year, the entire chorale, whether or not they are singing, will have to attend. After the service, there will be a luncheon for the chorale and their families, and whoever from the congregation that wishes to come, after which, the rabbi will teach the Book of Ruth. No longer will the educational aspects of our work be done only as part of the rehearsal, but now it will be given a special emphasis, and placed in a role by itself. It is a statement without any qualification that our work is not only musical, but educational as well, and thus the educational aspects will be treated as a special entity, just like the musical ones.

I believe the chorale is now prepared to accept that additional responsibility. They are prepared primarily, because it has been a function of the group, since its inception, even though it wasn't as openly pronounced. The chorale will be, as it always was, a meaningful and important way, in which our children will learn of their heritage, religion and culture.

There is never a musical work, in which the chorale doesn't learn something. Whether it is their link to Israel through their repertoire of Israeli songs, or the liturgy of the *Shabbat* and Holi-

days they learn through their participation at these services. They have studied about Yehuda Halevy and the Baroque musical style, the philosophy of hassidism, by singing the music of the *hassid*, and they have become aware of the great legacies in our Yiddish culture from the Yiddish songs that they sing. They have also learned other great values that will benefit them in life, such as discipline, the realization that one can receive great success and joy by doing something Jewish. Since our group encompasses a wide age range-nine through eighteen-they are learning how to get along with one another and to work for a united goal.

I would be terribly naive if I felt that this is the answer for all our educational problems, and that it is the solution for all that ails Jewish education. I would also be foolish to believe, that the members of the Beth Abraham Youth Chorale will all grow into educated and enlightened Jews, because of their experience in the chorale. But I do sincerely believe that music, especially when treated in a serious manner, can be a marvelous tool in educating our youngsters.

This method can be applied to other areas such as drama and art for those that have no interest in music, or for that matter, any activity, provided that you aspire to a high level of excellence. Then it will command respect from the community, an eagerness to participate from those who aren't a part of it, and a great source of pride, for those who are. But most importantly, it will serve as a great educational experience. Youngsters will learn of their Jewishness even though they are not necessarily aware of the fact that they are learning. At first, they will be learning through the back door, and hopefully, some day, through the front door.

## SOME PRELIMINARY NOTES FOR A FUTURE HISTORY OF HAZZANUT IN AMERICA

W. BELSKIN GINSBURG

This is a very preliminary endeavor to encompass the tremendous mass of available material into what must eventually be a history of American hazzanut. There are countless charts to be examined, minutes of hundreds of congregations, historical data of hundreds of communities in all parts of this country to say nothing of the countless articles on hazzanut which have been published in the English and Yiddish press in the past century. A large number of historical works which have appeared in the last two or three decades have not even bothered to index their references to hazzanim or hazzanut.

A detailed story of hazzanut in the United States must be written, but, as indicated, it is a colossal project which would take years of study and I commend it to the students of the Cantors Institute as a project worthy of consideration.

In this bicentennial year of American history, it might be well simply to review, in a superficial way, some of the highlights of the history of hazzanut to evaluate them, and to consider the direction in which hazzanut in America seems to be moving.

Hazzanut in the United States followed the tides of immigration. First came the **Sephardim** from Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands and from some of the South American settlements. By the time of the Revolution when the total population of all of the colonies was about three million, there were barely 2500 to 3000 Jews here. Then the **Ashkenaxim** began to arrive and in 1840, there were 15,000 Jews in the U.S. when the total population was seventeen million. By 1850, 50,000 ; by 1865, 150,000 ; by 1880 there were 250,000.

In the 1860's a small influx of Polish, Russian, and Rumanian immigrants began to arrive, sparsely at first, but bursting into a veritable torrent after the 1880's and far outnumbering both earlier groups. In nine years from 1891 to 1900, 600,000 came to these shores. By 1914 there were over two and one-half million Jews in this country, and just before the first World War it is estimated that there were three million Jews here all of whom, with the exception of about a quarter of a million, had arrived since 1880.

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The first Jewish group came to New Amsterdam in 1654. Very soon after, there were settlements in Charleston, South Carolina; Savannah, Georgia ; Newport, R.I. and New Orleans, La. Most of the earlier settlers remained in these settlements, but the later German settlers were more enterprising. They pushed out into the South, the Middle West, across the desert and the mountains to the coast so that there are records of the establishment of synagogues in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1824; in Chicago in 1847 and in Missouri, Alabama, Louisiana and Minnesota around that time and there was even a minyan for *Yom Kippur* services in San Francisco during the great gold rush in 1849. The next year, there were two congregations organized in San Francisco — one of them by the Germans and the other by English and Polish Jews.

When the great mass of Eastern European immigrants came, they remained concentrated in great centers. Separate groups with customs and ideals in common desired to live together and they each developed strong group consciousness. As a result, huge ghettos were established in the large cities such as New York, Chicago and Philadelphia.

Here in the New World, there soon began the process of intermingling of the cultural and religious ideas of this mixed mass of humanity. Certain, American traditions had taken root before their arrival and it was inevitable that these traditions should affect the established customs of the newcomers. A type of Judaism was being born, and at this date is still in the process of formation. Out of it will come the American Jew of the future.

It is quite natural that following the trends of immigration, the earliest congregations organized were Sephardic. As a matter of fact the only congregation in New York for over a hundred years was Sephardic. Their ritual was Sephardic and since there were no competent American born or trained hazzanim, the congregation imported them from abroad as soon as they were able to afford them.

Although the office of Hazzan in the Sephardic synagogue is closer to that of the Rabbi, it is not equivalent as is evidenced by the fact, as we shall see later, that a clear distinction between the two offices is stressed.

Surely in a discussion of hazzanut in the United States, the hazzan in the Sephardic community must be included for the following reasons :



1. The early history of hazzanut here encompass both the Sephardic and the Ashkenazic.
2. The influence of the former upon the latter in social and financial matters is clear.
3. In the early American congregations the Sephardim and *Ashkenazim* were intermingled and influence must have been exerted by one group upon the other.
4. Some of the early Sephardic hazzanim were of Ashkenazic origin (and vice versa).
5. The “growing pains” of hazzanut in the United States affected both groups, hence our consideration will, of necessity, include both groups.

The City of Charleston, South Carolina, had one of the largest settlements in the early history of the country. *Beth Elohim* was its first congregation. It was organized in 1749. Its first hazzan was Isaac Da Costa who came from London. As it was impossible to pay him or other later hazzanim sufficient to be able to maintain themselves completely from the stipends which the congregation was able to afford, many of the hazzanim engaged in other trades. We find Da Costa referred to as a “merchant” and “shop keeper”. Others engaged in shipping, real estate, secretarial work and importing. The same situation was true when the Polish and Russian Jews came and some of their hazzanim were obliged to engage in other businesses to sustain themselves.

In the exhaustive notes in the “Rise of the Jewish Community in New York” by Hyman B. Grinstein, there are some very interesting tables.

In Appendix II he gives the names of the earliest congregations in New York, when they were formed, the type of congregant, and the location covering the period up to 1860. Thus he begins with *Shearith Israel, 1655*, consisting of Portugese and Ashkenazic congregants.

The 2nd Congregation, *B'nai Jeshurun* was formed in 1825. In all, he names 27 congregations in New York up to 1859 consisting of English, Dutch, German, Polish, Bohemian, Russian and French origin.

The same pattern of congregants will be found in the earliest settlements all over the colonies until the arrival of the German immigrants. From that point and until later, East European immigration the congregants were predominately German.

In Philadelphia, **Mikve Israel**, a Sephardic congregation, was formed in 1870. **Rodef Sholom** followed in 1802 and became the oldest German Jewish congregation in the United States.

An idea of the earliest congregations around the country after the Colonial settlements can be had from the following table:

CITY	ESTABLISHED
Baltimore, Maryland	1829
St. Louis, Missouri	1837
Louisville, Kentucky	1842
Fort Wayne, Indiana	1848
San Francisco, California	1850
Chicago, Illinois	1852
New Orleans, Louisiana	1853
Macon, Georgia	1859
Evansville, Indiana	1864
Des Moines, Iowa	1872
Pennsacola, Florida	1874
Denver, Colorado	1874
Las Vegas, New Mexico	1884

An excellent and detailed account of the synagogues and hazzanim of Charleston, S.C. is given in Reznikoff and Engleman's "Jews of Charleston" published in 1950. Charleston was one of the most influential Jewish communities in the early Colonial days.

After the first hazzan of **Beth Elohim**, Isaac Da Costa, resigned in 1764, Abraham Alexander followed from 1764 to 1784. During the Revolution, Alexander served as a lieutenant. In 1785, he married Anna Sarah Huguenin, who was not a Jewess, but she became a devout and strictly observant Jewess and in her will expressed her faith in the "Almighty God of Israel, my Creator" and requested that she be buried in a Jewish cemetery.

From 1785 to 1805, Abraham Azuby was their hazzan and after his resignation, the congregation wrote to London for a "hazzan of merit and classical education". London sent Benjamin Cohen D'Azevedo, a son of the chief Rabbi of London, but he was soon paid his expenses and sent back to London.

From 1806 to 1811 various congregants acted as hazzanim. Then in 1811, Emanuel Nunes Carvalho was elected. He resigned in 1814 and later became the hazzan of **Mikve Israel** of Philadelphia. While in Charleston he became involved in quite a battle **with the** authorities of the congregation, who in those days were the supreme

authorities of the community. According to a letter written by Mordecia M. Noah, "he taught the children to sing the concluding psalm of the Sabbath morning service in a very handsome manner which in a measure did away with the discordance which attends every synagogue. For a whim or caper he discontinued the ceremony and forbade the children to sing. Carvalho, in person, aided and abetted the confusion and riot which took place and in a short time the whole meeting, parness and all were battling with clubs and bruising, boring, etc. . . . .The result has completely destroyed the smali remnant of responsibility and character yet left for Mr. Carvalho — his duty was not to take the law in his own hands, but to submit with respect to the conduct and resolve of the private adjuncta who are composed of the most respected and indeed the most enlightened part of the congregation". The case was taken into court. Disturbing a congregation of Hebrews was an indictable offense at common law, although the offender was a member of the same faith.

After Carvalho's resignation, Beth *Elohim* had only lay leaders for four years. In 1818, Hartwig Cohen was elected hazzan and he served until 1823. His daughter, Sarah, married Sailing L. Wolfe and their daughter was Belle Baruch who was the mother of Bernard M. Baruch. In 1824, a petition for Reform was filed by a group of members requesting a sermon by the hazzan weekly — an abridgement of the service and less Hebrew. It was refused, and the Reform Society of Israelites was organized. Carvalho became the first Reader without pay.

In 1836, Gustavus Poznanski was appointed as hazzan and minister and two years later, he was elected for life. He had come to Charleston from an insignificant post in New York, highly recommended by Isaac Leeser, one of the great religious leaders of that period who was then hazzan of *Mikve Israel* of Philadelphia. Poznanski had a German Reform background. When 38 members of the congregation petitioned for the use of an organ to assist in vocal parts, they had the support of Poznanski, but the trustees rejected it by a close vote. When the new synagogue was dedicated in 1840 Poznanski spoke at the dedication service "chiefly in vindication on grounds of both reason and scripture of the restoration of instrumental music in his congregation as an auxiliary to divine worship and the beautiful and salutary as well as scriptural propriety of praising Him with stringed instruments and with organs".

Isaac Leeser wrote several articles in the "Occident" pointing out that the introduction of an organ was contrary to Sephardic custom and warned that this innovation would lead to great dissension.

The organ went into the new synagogue building however, and Poznanski introduced portions of the service in English and preached against the observance of the 2nd days of Festivals. He ran into trouble with the Trustees constantly with his outspoken Reform views. He was referred to in the minutes of the congregation as the "Rev. Chason". His duties were chiefly those of a reader or cantor and he refused to preach. Ultimately, as a result of ill feeling between dissenting groups, a lock was put on the door of the synagogue and the matter got into the courts.

Apart from the legal issue involved, the court said that the musical restriction would be "an attempt to anticipate the decision of posterity on matters that must be affected by the progress of art and the general tone of society and which could not be controlled by arbitrary legislation".

Poznanski resigned in 1843, but he served afterwards without compensation. He offered to resign again in 1847, but he was urged to remain as a bulwark of the new Reform Judaism. He remained a member of the congregation even after he moved to New York, where in 1879, he was struck on the head by a horse and died.

In 1850, Isaac Mayer Wise, who later was to become the leader of Reform Judaism in the U.S., filed an application for the position of Hazzan in *Beth Elohim*, but he refused to accept it when it was offered, on the grounds of illness. He had met Poznanski and referred to him as "stiff, cold, rich, proud and self satisfied."

The German and Polish Jews of Charleston formed a new congregation in Charleston — *Berith Elohim*, in 1855.

After the Civil War, there was a consolidation of both synagogues but there was continuous dissension. "The leader of the choir was willing to sing the old tunes (that the Orthodox wanted), but he would also sing the "new tunes" (equally cherished by the other portion of the congregation) and this without "rule or time for so doing".

Eventually, *Beth Elohim*, the old Sephardic orthodox congregation, joined the reform Union of American Hebrew Congregations in 1873.

In 1874, an orthodox congregation, *Beth Shalom*, was organized and by 1945, it had a membership of 280 members. There are two other synagogues, *Beth Israel* and Synagogue *Emanu El* which are offshoots of *Brith Shalom*. A conservative congregation, *Emanu El*, was organized in 1947.

Almost all of the old communities developed in a similar pattern and a study of one or two communities will serve to reflect the history of most of them.

In New York until 1825, the only place of worship was Sephardic, even when the *Ashkenazim* were in the majority. But ritualistic differences and, later, congregational politics caused many secessions and new Ashkenazic synagogues were formed. *Rodef Shalom* in Philadelphia was formed by secession from Sephardic *Mikve Israel* in 1802, and *Bnai Jeshurun* was formed, in New York, by secession from *Shearith Israel* in 1825.

Then there followed a number of other secessions. In 1839, *Shaarey Zedek*. Then followed *Shaarey Hashamayim*. In 1824, *Rodeph Shalom*. Then *Beth Israel*, in 1843. Even Temple *Emanu El*, which was organized in 1845, may be viewed as a secession from other German synagogues. *Shaarey Tefilah* was organized in 1845. *Anshe Chesed*, in 1850, was the largest Ashkenazic synagogue in the country.

Some of these congregations, having begun with a majority of German Jews maintained that character ; others, like *Bnai Jeshurun*, which started with English and Dutch Jews, absorbed the German element and later the East European Jews.

The first Ashkenazic hazzanim in America were employed by *Bnai Jeshurun*. From 1827 to 1845, they were Phineas A. Hart, Alexander Hart, Mr. Miers, Samuel Mayer Isaacs and Ansel Leo.

New York City, and in fact the entire country, knew no rabbi until the 5th decade of the 19th century. The hazzan was already considered a "minister" in the 18th century. This status was due to many reasons. 1. The Jews of New York frequently had to be represented to the general public by a "minister", and the hazzan was the only official who could serve in that role. 2. The Jews of New York had very little Jewish knowledge. However poorly trained the hazzan was, his was better than their's and in the absence of more authoritative sources of information, he was naturally looked upon as a religious leader and was consulted frequently on points of Jewish law. 3. Gershon Mendes Seixas held the position of hazzan. He was born in New York in 1745. In 1786, when he was 23 years old he was elected as the hazzan of *Shearith Israel* for the period of "decent and good behavior". During the revolution, he used every possible means to win the support of his congregation for the American cause. His task was all inclusive. He was a preacher, reader, teacher, and community servant. He was respected by Jews and Christians

alike and his personal prestige raised the position of **hazzan to a** very high level. He was received as a “minister” by Christian colleagues.

Jacques Judah Lyons came to minister as hazzan at **Shearith Israel** in 1840. He did not preach but through ministerial work such as visiting the sick, comforting those in sorrow, guiding those who needed spiritual help, Lyons achieved the distinction of being venerated by the members of his congregation.

One of the reasons ascribed for some of the secessions, especially by the German, Polish and Russian arrivals, was the rising power of the Hazzan in the Sephardic congregations.

In the old days, especially among the **Ashkenaxim**, the hazzan who led the services was a layman like every other worshipper. In fact, any observant Jew who had a good voice and knew the melodies of the service could serve as a reader. No special training was necessary for this office nor was any form of ordination required. The volunteer hazzan was more in evidence than the regularly paid official. Professional specialization had developed only with respect to the Sabbath and Holy Day services.

The rabbi in early modern times was rather an official of the Jewish community, — the interpreter of Jewish religious law and head of the Jewish court. In some places he added leadership to **Yeshivot**. In Eastern Europe, he preached twice a year : before **Yom Kippur** and before **Pesah**. The sermons were usually discussions of legal matters rather than exhortations on religious subjects. Nowhere did the sermons or lectures serve as an integral part of synagogue worship. **Shearith Israel**, until 1860, never engaged as its Minister a man who had rabbinical ordination ; all its ministers were Hazzanim. This was true of all Spanish and Portuguese congregations.

Grinstein, in Appendix V, gives a list of Rabbis, lecturers and hazzanim holding office in New York City until 1860. Except for about seven rabbis, all of the ministers of the 27 congregations involved, until 1859, were hazzanim, or, in later years, hazzanim and lecturers.

In America, many changes occurred in the traditional pattern. Complications arose because of the rise of the hazzan who, in addition to his duties of reading the service, engaged in preaching and other ministerial functions. Regular preaching during services was instituted in New York by the Hazzan Samuel M. Isaaco in 1839 in **Bnai Jeshurun** and later at **Shaarey Tefilah**.

4. The early Colonial law of marriage enacted in 1864 authorized the performance of a ceremony by only two officials, a minister of religion or a Justice of the Peace. Until 1830 when the law was changed to permit Jews to perform marriage ceremonies in accordance with their own customs, the Jewish community had to recognize a “minister”. By 1835, any Jew could perform the ceremony of marriage even though not a minister of religion, but the synagogues, with which the person was affiliated, could have penalized him for violating a synagogue regulation which permitted only the hazzan to perform marriages.

5. Also because in the State laws of 1784 of New York, on the incorporation of religious societies, mention was made of “ministers”, all New York clergymen were titled Reverend and in one case even “Pastor”. As a result of this new status, hazzanim considered it beneath their dignity to do manual labor or engage in any business. The press began to refer to hazzanim as the “Jewish Clergy” and at times even as “divines”.

After the arrival of many Polish and German Jews, opposition to the important role assumed by the hazzan soon arose. The German Jews maintained the tradition that a rabbi was superior to a hazzan and admitted to preaching only men with rabbinical ordination. The Polish Jews came to America with their old traditions intact. Both groups united in objection to making the hazzan a spiritual leader. As a result, chaos reigned and each synagogue, each group, even each individual made his own choice of hazzan, rabbi, lecturer, or talmudic authority.

During this period also the great struggle between reform and orthodoxy was taking place in America. Reform Judaism grew in a large measure because of the able leadership of the movement.

Isaac Leiser, who was the Hazzan of *Mikve Israel* of Philadelphia, but had no rabbinic training, was a tower of strength in defense of Orthodoxy, although he was ready for certain modifications. He introduced the English sermon as a regular feature of the service in Philadelphia, even before Hazzan Samuel Mayer Isaacs of *B'nai Jeshurun* in New York and Morris J. Raphall in Ashkenazic Synagogues.

Gradually, some of the German congregations which had joined the Reform movement discarded their hazzanim. Others like *Adath Jeshurun* in Philadelphia and *B'nai Jeshurun in New York* stemmed the tide, but introduced innovations which were followed in other

congregations. Thus, in 1833, *Adath Jeshurun* of Philadelphia was the first congregation to introduce late Friday evening services. A great many congregations throughout the country did not employ either hazzan or a rabbi during their earliest years and many of them, especially the orthodox group, employed hazzanim from time to time, especially during the High Holy Days long before they employed permanent rabbis.

East European congregations held firmly to the old customs of their place of origin, in which the hazzan played a prominent role.

In the early days it was difficult to procure the services of a hazzan. The congregation refused to give long term contracts and the hazzanim, who were men of prominence, refused to leave Europe without some guarantee of permanence and security. They came up annually for election and frequently failed to receive endorsement of electors, but towards the end of the 19th century, many of the important congregations began to compete with one another in the selection of cantors. Each wanted to surpass the other in employing a greater "star" among the hazzanim.

Just before the Civil War, New York first greeted the arrival of hazzanim, gifted with good and well trained voices who were the forerunners of those world renowned hazzanim of whom New York boasted at a later time. Perhaps the first of them was Rev. Leon Sternberger of Warsaw, who arrived in America in 1849 and became Hazzan at *Anshe Chesed*. They already had a hazzan, Rev. James Hecht, but he was made Sternberger's assistant. A non-Jew, Mr. Sauer, acted as authority on voice in a committee appointed by the members, to ascertain the musical qualifications of the applicants. Sternberger organized and instructed a choir. He thus enhanced the prestige of the synagogue and increased its attendance.

Other synagogues followed. *Bnai Jeshurun*, in 1855, elected Ignatius Ritterman of Cracow, who had studied music in Vienna. He also organized a choir but he remained only three years when Rev. Judah Kramer of Wilna was appointed.

*Emanu El*, from its formation until 1852, had the services of Hazzan G. M. Cohen, who seemed to have used his own musical settings as well as compositions in use in Munich, Vienna and Paris. The scramble for better trained men led them to dismiss Cohen and elect Adolph Rubin. Cohen refused to give up music to his successor and it was necessary to resort to legal action to force him to do so.



It might be interesting at this point to read the requirements to which some of the hazzanim of this period contracted. In general the duties of the hazzan were to attend and lead all services and to perform the rites of marriage and burial and in some synagogues to read the Torah. When a rabbi was engaged he relieved the hazzan of some of his duties, particularly that of conducting the marriage service.

Hazzan Cohen's duties at *Emanu-El*, as described in the minutes of the congregation of April 12, 1848, which at that time were kept in the German language, were as follows :

1. To be present and officiate at every service.
2. To be present and cooperate at all choir rehearsals.
3. To write all of the music required for the services.
4. To consult with the lecturer or rabbi for instructions, fourteen days before the holidays and other public functions.
5. If a school should be erected, to function in such a way as he shall be directed.
6. If it should be required, he shall act as assistant secretary, for which he shall receive an additional salary.

The duties of Leon Sternberger, as taken from the meeting of the trustees of *Anshe Chesed* of November 29, 1849, were as follows :

- A. To read on Friday night from *Lekhu neranena* until the service is over.
- B. To read on Shabbat morning from *Nishmat* until the *Sefer Torah* is on the shulhan and then again from *Yekum Purkun* until the service is over.
- C. To be in the synagogue Shabbat to *Minha* but not to read.
- D. To be in the synagogue on *Yom Kippur Katan* and to read if the Board of Trustees shall request him to do so.
- E. To perform the celebration of marriages provided that he has received the written permission thereto from the Board of Trustees, and at such celebration to wear his silk cloak; his duty of performing the celebration of marriages to cease from the moment that this congregation shall get a *Rav* on whom this duty would devolve.

- F. To attend the levaya of any member or of his wife or *of* his children, if such have attained the 3rd year, who may happen to die and to be buried on the burial ground of this congregation, also to wear his silk cloak on such occasions.
- G. To read the prayers in the synagogue on such days as the State government may designate as days of religious celebration and observance for all religious denominations.

The hazzan in older synagogues wore a special cloak and hat while officiating. This practice first started at ***Shearith Israel***. At ***Anshe Chesed*** a peculiar three-cornered hat had to be worn by the hazzan, but it was discarded in 1842. Hazzanim tied white handkerchiefs around their necks, during the rendition of the service.

All of the ministers, hazzanim, preachers or rabbis were under the strictest control of the president of the congregation. No marriage ceremony could be performed without his sanction.

Grinstein has another chart showing the salaries of hazzanim during the early period of ***Shearith Israel*** which may be taken as an index of the salaries paid by other congregations.

In 1750, the annual salary of a hazzan was £ 50, six cords of walnut wood and ***matxoth*** for Passover; In 1765 it was £ 80 in addition to a residence. In 1808 it rose to £ 250, in 1820 it was \$1200 dropping in 1830 to \$700 and in 1839 to \$1500. In evaluating these figures, it must be remembered that the purchasing power of a dollar in 1839 was easily three to four times its present value.

In the late 1850's, ***Shearith Israel*** paid its Hazzan Lyons, \$2500. At the same time the lecturer, or Rabbi, was paid \$2000. At the same time, ***Anshe Chesed*** paid \$1000 to its Cantor Sternberger, \$1200 to its lecturer. ***Shaarey Tfila*** paid Isaacs \$2000.

***B'nai Jeshurun*** elected Rev. Edward Kartchmaroff as its Hazzan in 1876. In 1912, the congregation celebrated his 35th anniversary and elected him Hazzan Emeritus at a salary of \$2500. Then after one year of Rev. Reuben Rinder, (Rinder went to Temple ***Emanu El*** in San Francisco) Rev. Jacob Schwartz was elected and he remained for over 40 years until his death. Both Kartschmaroff and Schwartz had served as President of the Cantors and Ministers Association. Schwartz was also Chairman of a Committee on the establishment of a Cantors Seminary appointed by the United Synagogue of America.

Quoting from Rabbi Goldstein's history of the congregation, he says "Under direction of the Cantors, the Congregation's musical service added much to the reputation of B'nai *Jeshurun* in the city and attracted many who felt drawn by the artistic and thoroughly Jewish rendition of the ancient ritual."

It was the religious services which helped spread the reputation of the congregation. New congregations sought to establish a kind of service, which while retaining the essentials of orthodoxy, should permit a few innovations-organ-family pews and mixed choir.

Regulations to increase the beauty and dignity of the service began early. Before the middle of the 19th century only *Shearith Israel* made provision for any congregational singing. As early as 1805, no member of *Shearith Israel* could begin singing, until the hazzan had given the key, and no one could raise his voice above that of the hazzan. In 1834, the hazzan was asked not to pitch the tone too high. In 1856, *Beth El* introduced congregational chanting and during the same decade, congregational chanting of *Mizmor L'David, En Kelohenu* and *Adon Olom*.

Hazzan Sternberger introduced a study period for *Kohanim* to sing together and later in harmony. Only those who received instructions were allowed to bless the congregation. Great problems were involved however, in the development of choirs and choir rivalries.

Formation of a choir for general services on Sabbath was discouraged, at first, as an innovation. They began to rise during the middle of 19th century. *Temple Emanu-El 1845* inaugurated the practice and in a short time great rivalry resulted from others because of competition-each vied with the other for better trained hazzanim, better vocalists and choristers.

*Emanu El-1845* had a male choir consisting of its members. Free membership was given in exchange for singing ; there were also children in the choir-each child received a suit of clothes each year as a gift. A choir leader was introduced in 1848 at \$75. a year. Average compensation in 1848 was \$25 for unmarried persons-married persons-2 seats. Two years later, Singer became director at \$75. a year. He had 8 paid choristers.

Sternberger came to *Anshe Chesed* in 1849 and began to give instructions to a choir. He used a violin, 16 adults, both men and women and 11 children and sang Sulzer's "*Shir Zion*". Choir Committee reports presented a record of constant changes and difficul-

ties. The question of a mixed choir received little notice at *Anshe Chesed* which began to tend toward reform in 1849.

Jonas Hecht, the hazzan *sheni* who sang with choristers, was asked to leave the choir on the ground that it was not proper for the hazzan to sing with ladies in one choir and to run in and out twice during the service. Hecht replied that the singing of the hazzan with ladies in one choir was not prohibited by any Jewish laws, but that the singing of the ladies itself was not in accordance with the rites of the Jewish religion. The trustees ordered him removed from the list of the choristers.

The third choir was that of *Bnai Jeshurun* organized in 1850 by Hazzan Ritterman, who trained a paid choir consisting of men and boys only. On Friday nights and Saturdays, they dressed in special robes and caps. Sulzer's music was used and they wrote for music from Europe.

There were many other choirs organized by other congregations and later by choir directors who attained great prominence such as Zavel Zilberts, Leon Kramer, Joseph Rumshinsky, Herman Wohl, M. Machtenberg and Leo Low. Most of the choirs were all male, and men sang the soprano parts in falsetto. There are still a number of such choirs in Orthodox congregations while most of the Conservative have mixed choirs of Jewish singers. Most of the Reform temples use mixed choirs, male and female both Jewish and Gentile. The organists are usually Gentile as there is a great dearth of competent Jewish organists.

When the first Russian and Polish Jews arrived in this country, they joined the established German congregations, but in 1852, they established their own first congregation in New York-Beth Hamidrash Hagodol. *Beth Elohim* was organized, in Brooklyn, in 1854. As early as 1872 there were 29 synagogues of the Orthodox Eastern European *minhag* in New York City. There were some in Philadelphia, Boston, and Baltimore and Chicago, and in dozens of other cities as far west as California. When the great tide of Russian and Polish Jews came, beginning with the 1880's, they soon began to organize great numbers of separate *chevres* in private dwellings, in stores and in halls. Some of them soon were able to build their own synagogue buildings. So great was their growth that in 1918, there were 1127 places of worship in New York. 730 were Orthodox. Including the handful of established synagogues there were only 237 synagogue buildings.

In the great concentrated centers it was only the largest congregations who could afford the luxury of maintaining yearly cantors at reasonable salaries and in many, he was the only religious functionary. The smaller congregations, for the most part, subsisted upon the income from the sale of tickets for seats during the High Holy Days. It therefore, became vital for each of them to put their best foot forward during that season and great competition arose among them in the selection of their hazzanim and the size and quality of the choirs. Large placards, greatly exaggerating the virtues and capabilities of their respective hazzanim and choirs were hung across the fronts of synagogues, halls and theatres and many congregations “mushroomed” into existence for the Holy Days only. There were not enough good cantors to go around and consequently many pseudo-hazzanim arose to fill the gap. It was also necessary to *change* the attraction each year.

This was the era also, when many young boys, “*wunder kinder*” arose as hazzanim and were ecstatically received by the Orthodox Jewish population.

The great competition and the lure of lucre lead to the importation of many renowned European cantors who appeared as “stars” in Orthodox congregations all over the country. Some of them became the official hazzanim of prominent congregations at large salaries (\$10,000 or more per annum in some) with the privilege of augmenting these salaries with guest or concert appearances elsewhere. I mention only a few of such stars whose names became renowned in the last generation or so—Sirota, Karniol, Moshe Shteinberg, Kwartin, Hershman, Kapoff-Kagan, Vigoda, Katchko, Roitman, Rutman and Yoselle Rosenblatt.

The appearance of these hazzanim, each with his individual style, in wide areas, necessitated the use of booking agencies and gave rise to cantorial agents, who soon began to trade in hazzanim as a commercial commodity, and disrupted the dignity of the profession.

The art of most of these hazzanim was perpetuated on a large number of cantorial records, which the Jewish populace eagerly absorbed and many imitative hazzanim arose.

Many of these “star” hazzanim were learned and serious musicians earnestly devoted to their profession. Their congregants and audiences had open and receptive minds to the cantorial art, witness the fact that when the Cantors Ministers Association had its 30th Anniversary Concert in Madison Square Garden in New York in

1927, 15,000 persons were present and thousands were turned away.

There were also concert artists who became hazzanim for the holidays and attracted large audiences, but such performances added nothing to the dignity or permanence of hazzanut as a profession. There arose a number of hazzanim without special learning and without musical background and whose cantorial foundation consisted of a few years of singing with a choir and a few lessons with established hazzanim and the study of a few hazzanic recitatives and records. They could hardly be expected to command the respect of the populace and maintain the dignity of the profession.

An article written by Rev. N. Abramson, President of the Jewish Cantors Association for the Jewish Communal Register of 1917-18 states: "The problem of the cantor or professional hazzan may be summed up under three heads: the trial performance, the short term contract, and the congregational politicians causing humiliation and degradation. The hazzan combines both the artist and religious functionary and ill treatment not only debases his art, but degrades his communal activity. Trial performance is petty graft. The remedy is to insist on payment for trials. Dismissal of a hazzan from his congregation, is no more thought of, than discharge of an operator from a tailor shop. Under a short term contract, he never knows when he will have to fold his tent".

He speaks of the organization of a Cantors' Seminary as a communal project. There were no cantorial schools. There were however, a number of recognized hazzanim-Lipitz, Schwartz, Katchko, Weiser, Reisen, Beimel and later Wohlberg, who taught men who were willing to devote their lives to the profession and the hazzanic art. Many of these young men now occupy prominent positions and have broadened their knowledge throughout the years and gained the respect of their colleagues and congregants.

In the past decade or so, a goodly number of European hazzanim who had occupied leading positions in prominent congregations, fled from the Nazi terror and established themselves in this country. Most of them are excellent musicians and full of hazzanic knowledge and tradition and have added dignity and stability to the profession.

The need for a school to train hazzanim was keenly felt as early as the 1840's and 50's.

In 1841, Isaac Leeser discussed with Rev. Louis Solomon of **Rodeph Sholom** congregation of Philadelphia and proposed a meet-

ing to consider a plan for uniting synagogues in the country. He suggested the establishment of a group to supervise all religious functions, examine hazzanim, shohtim, etc. It also included the establishment of a central school for training hazzanim, lecturers and teachers. He failed to get cooperation and he tried again, in 1845 and 1849, but he failed both times.

The Cantors and Ministers Association of America had the establishment of a school as their primary objective for many years -in fact a large sum of money was raised by them in 1940 when the establishment of a school was their slogan, but for various reasons no school was created by them.

In 1948, the Hebrew Union School of Jewish Sacred Music was organized and for the first time a regular course of study for the profession with able teachers became a reality, Its graduates have just begun to enter the ranks of regular full-time hazzanim.

In 1952, the Jewish Theological Seminary, implementing the ardent desire of our own Cantors Assembly, created the Cantors Institute with a 6 year course of study, a curriculum carefully considered and with renowned teachers. There was also the creation of a cantorial school by the Seminary of Yeshiva University.

Several cantorial organizations arose in this country, which played important roles in hazzanic history. There was the "Society of American Cantors" founded in 1894-President Alois Kaiser-object "To develop the music of the synagogue and promote good fellowship among the members of the profession".

There was the Cantors Association of America organized June, 1908, which succeeded the Society and which was not really a professional organization. It was more of a cantor's club and was dominated by the German Ashkenazic group. Later it was dominated by the Yiddish speaking East European group who attempted to establish it on a more professional basis. The name was changed to Jewish Ministers Cantors Association of America. The reform group broke away and formed their own organizations. Also a Cantor's Cultural Organization was formed and another group known as the Cantor's Federation. There was great internal strife among the members of the latter and at one time, they even declared a sort of strike against the synagogues on the eve of the Holy Days to correct intolerable practices which had been adopted by the synagogues.

Their dream, as above set forth, was the creation of a Cantorial School which did not materialize. They are functioning today as the Jewish Ministers Cantors Association with its members mostly of the Orthodox group.

There are a number of so called branches in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Chicago, Canada, the West Coast and New England. All of these are now autonomous and are not governed in any way by the New York group.

About 1940, the writer attempted to organize the Cantors on a national basis. A constitution and by-laws and rules of ethics were drawn up. Several meetings were held in New York with the various cantorial organizations. The primary objective was the organization of a cantorial school. A great deal of enthusiasm was engendered and some money was raised. But the movement failed because the New York representatives were unwilling to cooperate unless they controlled the organization.

In 1946, the Cantors Assembly was organized in conjunction with the Music Department of the United Synagogue. In a few years of intensive activity, the Assembly has become the most prominent and authoritative organization of hazzanim in America.

An association of certified cantors was organized in 1953 for the purpose of acting as an organ for all cantors, whom a certifying Board, set up by various groups, will admit. The organization is too young to be able to evaluate it.

In the past few decades conservatism has moved forward and a large number of rabbinical graduates of the Seminary have become spiritual leaders of many congregations which have undergone a transition from orthodoxy to conservatism. Conservatism runs the entire gamut from almost orthodox to almost reform, and while there is no official standard pattern of unified service in all conservative congregations, a definite pattern is being formed in the use of standard *siddurim*, etc., in the adoption of the sermon as an integral part of all Sabbath and holiday services, in the introduction of late Friday evening services, in the limitation of time making it imperative that the entire service be squeezed into an allotted time.



The pattern of service, even in orthodox congregations, where cantors might have a freer opportunity for improvisation, is moving towards the conservative pattern, and there is no time for excess hazzanic pyrotecnics, even if there is a taste for it. All of this, in the long run, must stifle the growth and practice of the old type hazzanut in this country.

The congregants are no longer saturated with the synagogal motifs-most congregants cannot *daven*, let alone before the *amud*, as in the days gone by.

On the face of this, it seems very discouraging, but should not be misinterpreted to mean that the growth of hazzanut in this country is at an end. On the contrary, it is just beginning. A new type of American hazzan will, of necessity, evolve. Traditionalism vs. modernism in synagogue music is a live question and composers like Weiner, Milhaud, Fromm, Helfman, Freed, Vinaver, Bloch pointing the direction which synagogue music will assume. Men like David Putterman, Moshe Nathanson, Max Wohlberg, Gershon Ephros, and many others are constantly producing or encouraging the production of new music as well as music based upon ancient modes, having in mind the limitations of the service. Jews are again slowly realizing that the soul of the synagogue service is the music and that a true religious inspiration and experience is unthinkable without music.

Even the reform element is seeking to stimulate synagogue singing in order "to infuse life and warmth into the services by the singing of the Hebrew responses and hymns".

An authoritative and universal stabilization of the areas of authority in the religious services is required. This will eventually come about by the meeting of the minds of hazzanim, rabbis and synagogue authorities. When this occurs the hazzan will be able to devote himself more assiduously to the task of building the musical portion of the service with tradition, beauty and dignity and with a proper regard for all of the other modern elements which form a successful service.

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## THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF SHOLOM KALIB

RICHARD NEUMANN

In a recent issue of this Journal, I was privileged to review briefly some of the music of Hazzan Todros Greenberg, of blessed memory. At that time I was unaware of the fact that a great deal of Greenberg's music could not have come to our attention if not for the devoted work of Sholom Kalib, who arranged and edited most of those works.

Dr. Sholom Kalib is a relatively new voice in the world of Jewish composition. Born in Dallas, Texas, he spent most of his life in Chicago where he arranged and composed music for Chicago's leading cantors. Sholom Kalib holds Bachelors and Masters degrees from De Paul University and received his Ph.D. in music from Northwestern University in 1973. He is now professor of music at Eastern Michigan University and serves as cantor for Congregation Beth Moses in Detroit.

Within the last two years, Dr. Kalib wrote two works, commissioned by the Beth Abraham Youth Chorale of Dayton, Ohio, which is under the direction of Cantor Jerome Kopmar. One of these works is a setting for chorus and orchestra of eight Hassidic niggunim into one "Suite", under the title "Rejoice And Sing". The other work is "The Days of Awe", a concert setting of the high holiday liturgy for chorus and cantor-solo, with orchestra, composed in four movements : 1) **Selichos**: God The Listener, 2) **Rosh** Hashonah : God The King, 3) **Yom Kippur**: God The Judge and 4) **N'iloh**: God The Forgiver.

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Both works were beautifully recorded on Amim Records, with Jerome Kopmar's Youth Chorale. The "Days of Awe" soloist was Cantor Jacob Barkin. The Hassidic Suite "Rejoice And Sing" is available in print from Tara Publications of New York. This publication, however, is scored only for chorus and piano accompaniment, which cannot be compared with the lovely orchestration of Sholom Kalib, as performed in the recorded first performance. The orchestration is also available from Tara Publications.

While the earlier "Hassidic Suite" is based on given hassidic tunes, the "Concert Service" is an original composition, also based on the traditional *Nussach Hatfilah* of Ashkenazic Jewry. Both works are most usable for congregational youth or adult choirs. The orchestral accompaniment, although quite skillfully and imaginatively written, is purposely only a secondary element of the composition, so that the entire work could also be used a Capella.

It is the usability of both works, spanning the whole ideological spectrum of Jewish concert and synagogue music, which is the vantage point from which I would like to comment on them and on Dr. Kalib's contribution. A great deal of Synagogue music of fine caliber has been brought to the concert stage, and vice versa, during the past half century. But how much of that fine music can be claimed by the total Jewish community? How many hazzanim and choir directors can really utilize all the splendid contemporary works which were created by Jewish composers within the past few decades, spanning the three major groups of ideology in American Jewry? Surely, with a little effort, to embrace the available music of the past half century, many works by Zavel Zilberts, Leo Low, Max Helfman, Lazar Weiner, Abraham Binder, Herbert Fromm, to name only a few, could become the collective expression and property of all Jews, both in and outside the synagogue.

I am even optimistic enough to predict, that, where it is not so, yet, this will be the case, just as Sulzer, Lewandowski and Naumbourg of the 19th century are now "classics" of all synagogue music. But what we need now, among other things, is some way to "talk to each other" musically, some medium which speaks for all of us, perhaps a modest medium of simple humility. I think Sholom Kalib, and I am sure others, who are occupied in creating *usable* musical works, may provide this needed medium of a musical expression for *K'lal Yisrael*. Another, if not the most important element of Dr. Kalib's contribution is the choice of his performers for the works which I am discussing here. His choice was a Youth Chorale of about 80 young Jewish people from "middle America", the Beth Abraham

Youth Chorale of Dayton, Ohio, led by Cantor Jerome Kopmar. Kalib's works served as an educational tool of great importance, which Hazzan Kopmar knew how to use. Through the "Hassidic Suite", these 80 boys and girls, ages 8 to 18, whose only other Jewish educational opportunity is a congregational Hebrew school, perhaps three times a week, experienced the teachings of Hassidism by getting totally involved in the spirit of Hassidic *niggunim*, while at the same time, acquiring the necessary discipline of professional musical performance. These youngsters learned to "find themselves", to identify with their tradition through music, without taking the "far-out" road of equating Hassidic spirit with commercial, quasi-rock music of many of their confused contemporaries.

Through the "Days of Awe" concert service, which they eventually sang for a worship service in their synagogue, they joined their cantor to become a collective *Sh'liah Txibur* for their community and learned a tradition by an experience which will remain with them. Thus, his music became a valuable live extension of Jewish education, far more effective than most of our formal classroom education. We need hundreds of such educational experiences, and it is for these experiences that the kind of functional works, this kind of Jewish *Gebrauchsmusik* should be written. This may well be the necessary medium for *K'lal Yisrael* to talk to each other and it also may become a foundation upon which more creativity in Jewish music will be understood.

Dr. Kalib's choice of the melodic material for his "Rejoice And Sing" Hassidic suite is based on tunes which are the daily diet of young people, growing up in the new atmosphere of newly found identity, in the youth movements of all Jewish ideologies of the 1970's. It is a reality that this new consciousness of some of our youth, whether in the *yeshivot* of the Orthodox persuasion, the Ramah camps and USY-movement of Conservative Jewry or the Reform NFTY groups and camps, is to a large degree inspired by Israel, its Hassidic and other music festivals. It is also a reality that this consciousness is one of the most necessary elements in our struggle for survival, both in Israel and here. If for no other reason, the choice of the lively tunes in Kalib's, "Rejoice And Sing" is a timely affirmation of Jewish music today.

One may be more critical about his *treatment* of the material, but I would rather be constructively critical: it seems to me, we could expect more of our vocal groups, youth and adult choruses, in the 1970's, than the "thirds" or "sixths" which Dr. Kalib uses in

his three-part choral arrangement of the Suite. I fully understand that his primary goal, was not to dilute or over-arrange the simplicity of Hassidic tunes, but even within these guide-lines, Kalib could have been more challenging. I also think, the accompaniment of the Suite, although far better in the orchestration than in the printed piano version, should have been more of an extension of the total score than merely a chordal support for the voices. Again, I think the capabilities of contemporary choral groups can take more, if demands are made on them. An extension of the accompaniment would have added another dimension to the very well-conceived total musical picture.

While I believe that Dr. Kalib's musical contribution is one which undoubtedly adds to the necessary consolidation of the strides in Jewish music of our time, by the unifying appeal which his music has, I also believe that we should not lose sight of the strides which the recent generations of Jewish composers have made, who express themselves through musical idioms of the 20th century. We should certainly encourage those strides and thereby raise the level of the musical evolution which takes place all around us.

Finally, I would like to point out that in spite of the criticism I voiced, I think that Sholom Kalib is much closer to the heart-beat of Jewish musical expression than many of the attempts in which modern idioms are used, especially those which are the results of commercial pop-music, whether called neo-Hassidic or rock or whatever. He builds on something which perpetuates our Jewish identity. Both the Hassidic suite, "Rejoice And Sing" and the concert service, "The Days Of Awe" are genuine expressions of Jewish soul-music. To this alone, we should say: **Dayenu.**

## JEWISH MUSIC VERSUS JEWISH WORSHIP

JOSHUA R. JACOBSON

Although I have been actively involved in Jewish music for some time, I am a new subscriber to the *Journal of Synagogue Music*. I must say that I am delighted with the caliber and scholarship of the articles in the magazine. However, I was distressed to find in some *Journal* articles an attitude that troubled me for several years when I was a synagogue choir director: inverted priorities. Many cantors and choir directors seem to feel that the synagogue should serve the highest ideals of music rather than music should serve the highest ideals of the synagogue.

In order to be able to ask the question, "What sort of music would best serve the ideals of Jewish worship?" I feel that we must keep in mind one special characteristic of Jewish worship.

*Tefillah* has traditionally meant man relating directly and intimately with God. Abraham argues with God about the fate of his nephew, Lot's town, Sodom. Isaac wanders out to the fields in the late afternoon to meditate, or as the Hebrew Bible expresses it, *la-su-ach*, "to have a conversation". Jacob's dealings with God include wrestling with an angel (a very physical metaphor for the same one-to-one relationship), after which he is called "Israel", meaning "he who struggles with God." Moses speaks with God *panim al panim*, face to face.

And yet the Bible shows us over and over again that, as a *people*, the Jews are not mature enough to become strugglers with God on a one-to-one basis. They demand an intermediary. They say to Moses at Mount Sinai, "Let not God speak with us directly or we would die." They then force Moses' brother Aaron into the role of mediator between man and God. Even after Moses, the idealist, destroys the golden calf, Aaron the priest, provides as a compromise the contemporary form of mediation, animal sacrifice. But sacrificial ritual is surely not the meaning of this new religion. Even in the desert, the Jewish people are reminded that they are *all* to be *am kohanim*, an entire *nation* of priests.

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Several hundred years later, when sacrifice has been ritually established in Jerusalem, we still hear the voices of individual psalmists, doing their own singing directly to God. We sense the idealism of the Prophets, as when Isaiah preaches, "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? Saith the Lord, I am full of the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts. Bring no more vain oblations ; it is an offering of abominations unto me.' "

When the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed in 586 **B.C.E.**, and the sacrificial ritual was halted, the Jewish people was once again given the chance to express its religious fervor in direct communication with God ; either as individuals, or as a minyan, a **community of individuals** in the newly founded institution of the synagogue. Eventually, 600 years later, the synagogue was to take the place of animal sacrifice altogether.

Throughout the next millenia, Jews who worshipped approached God directly, through poetry, prayer, and song. An extreme example of this intimate (even **chutspadik**) man-God relationship is that of Reb Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev who spoke to God as a prosecutor to a criminal !

Under the influence of the Enlightenment, towards the end of the eighteenth century, a number of Jews in central Europe cast off certain elements of their Judaic burden. They adopted into the synagogue service many superficial elements of Christian ritual, including a superfluous decorum which encouraged passivity in prayer; they let the rabbi and cantor and choir do their praying for them. The role of the hazzan changed. For centuries a **Shaliach Tsibur** (a representative of the community), he now became a cantor who performed **for** the congregation ; the congregation rarely opened their mouths (except to sing hymns which were stolen from the Lutheran service).

In recent years, some of Jewry's finest composers (Bloch, Milhaud, Ben-Haim to name but a few) have written inspiring music for performance in the synagogue. And one can unquestionably sit back, and, listening to this music, truly be inspired with "religious feeling". But **inspiration** should supplement, not supplant **participation**. I am deeply inspired sitting in the concert hall or listening to recordings. And Bach's, "B - Minor Mass" and Beethoven's late string quartets can take me into the depths of my soul, just as Bloch's, "Sacred Service" can. But not in the same way that **davening can**.

My point is this: **tefilah** is a personal act, an individual voice reaching out with the rest of the Jewish community to God. Art



music can inspire, but only through the medium of other individuals who recreate this music for us. Therefore the *mitpalel* must turn to spontaneous music, to folk music, for his worship vehicle. The “folk music” I refer to is not tunes by Peter, Paul and Mary or Bob Dylan, or even Naomi Shemer, but traditional **nusach**. Furthermore, those Jews who have a sensitivity to tradition, will reject any, but Jewish modes and folk melodies. They will avoid singing *Sh'ma Yisrael* to the tune of the German tavern song, with which it has been coupled for a few hundred years ; and they will reject the singing of *Alenu* to the tune of a European hymn, of **Ve-ne'emar** to “Three Blind Mice” and of Bayom **hahu** to “The Farmer in the Dell.” (The insipidness of the last two should even outweigh chauvanistic considerations.)

But do not think that I am rejecting the idea of Jewish composers composing art music to Jewish themes and setting liturgical texts to music. Far from it. As conductor of the Zamir Chorale, I am constantly performing this music. But I perform it where it belongs : in the concert hall. For the totality of Jewish experience does not end outside of the synagogue.

Obviously my views will be unpopular among most readers of this journal. Cantors, choir directors and organists make their living providing art music for the synagogue. I am sure that most are not motivated by money alone, but by a devotion to Jewish ideals and culture, and by an overwhelming need to express themselves through the performance of music of the highest quality.

But if the synagogue is to maintain its integrity, its uniqueness, the cantor must remain a **shaliach tsibur**, the organist and choir must not expect to be listened to, but must lead the congregation in Jewish song. Don't neglect **tefilah** in the worship service. Don't neglect the performance of Jewish music in concert. But please, don't merge the two into one.

## RECORD REVIEW

## “THE DAYS OF AWE”

-by Sholom Kalib

Commissioned and recorded by the Beth Abraham Youth Chorale —  
 Conducted by Cantor Jerome B. Kopmar and featuring  
 Cantor Jacob Barkin as soloist.

Years ago, a movie starring Trevor Howard, traced the efforts of one idealist to save the African elephant from extinction. Its title, “The Roots of Heaven” might apply just as aptly to this latest album in Jerome Kopmar’s unique and growing catalogue. It too, would rescue from oblivion something precious and irreplaceable: the sounds to which our Eastern European forebears worshipped on the High Holy Days.

Certainly the primeval peal of the mastodon as it reverberated through the bush cannot have been more awesome than the trumpeted phrase with which the hazzan enters the prayer, “*Uvashofar Gadol Yitaka.*” The flexible power of Jacob Barkin’s dramatic tenor is stunning throughout the recording, but especially so here. His vocal line remains flawless and its timbre has been burnished to a mellow gold by years of disciplined use.

Yet, for all its splendor, Barkin’s robust instrument perfectly complements the predominantly soprano quality of the Beth Abraham Youth Chorale. This large children’s choir spans the critical decade of the boys’ voice change, (8-18) and is heavily overbalanced toward the girls’ upper range. The paucity of altos is somewhat ameliorated by judicious microphone placement. Inevitably, though, this expedient mars an otherwise consistent ensemble effect.

The four sides of this two-record set represent: Part 1, *Selichot*: God, the Listener; Part 2, *Rosh Hashanah*: God the King; Part 3, Yom *Kippur*: God the Judge; and Part 4, *N’ilah*: God, the Forgiver. Instrumental interludes precede and follow each section.

The composer, Sholom Kalib, has so completely immersed himself in the musical idiom of Eastern Europe, both secular and sacred, that it is impossible to separate the folk melos from his own finely turned phrases. A perfect example is his “*Ana Tavo*”, whose unison theme has an air of antiquity about it reminiscent of the fourteenth century Rhineland tunes thought to be as old as the Revelation at

Sinai. Kalib's development of this theme is a gem of concise choral writing in the great tradition of Samuel Naumbourg and Salomon Sulzer.

Another outstanding choral effect is achieved in "**Hayom Harat Olam**", in which the singers really enjoy themselves. In the midst of all the fun, the altos enter with what is patently the opening statement of a fugue. Precisely then, Kalib surprises everyone by answering, tutti, with a lullaby to the rhythm of "**Oifn Pripitshik**", the very soul of Yiddish folksong.

Two climactic hazzanic recitatives are "**Avinu Malkeinu**" and "**Shomeia Kol Bichyot**". Both are unabashedly derivative of earlier settings. The first, recalls Joshua Lind's composition, recorded by Leibele Waldman, and the second, paraphrases Josef Rosenblatt as well as his protege, Samuel Malavsky. Kalib's modal progressions are firmly within the established virtuoso framework; Jewish Phrygian, — minor on the fourth degree; Jewish Phrygian on the fourth degree, minor on the seventh degree. Both pieces will work well as concert solos.

If one must fault anything in this inspired world premiere performance it is the balance between chrous and small orchestra. The interludes are far less important than the care which Cantor Kopmar has lavished upon them would indicate. The entire work is actually conceived as *gebrauchmusik* which, in this case, means unaccompanied material for a worship service. (An SATB version is available from the composer) The elongated rhythm of a High Holy Day service indicates perfunctory treatment of all connecting material. This is balanced by greater range' in the dynamics and tempi of the prayers proper.

However, this generally excellent recording must be viewed as a concert performance and not as a service. As such it is subject to one final comment about the Ashkenazic dialect employed. As clothing marks the measure of a man, so does pronunciation articulate the atmosphere of a song. To recreate an orthodox mood, Kopmar would have his singers temporarily unlearn the Sephardic Hebrew which they have been painstakingly mastering for half their young lives. To listen even superficially to this attempt is to recognize its futility.

The album price is \$9.00 plus \$1.00 for postage and handling. It may be obtained from the Beth Abraham Youth Chorale; 1306 Salem Avenue — Dayton, Ohio, 45406.

JOSEPH A. LEVINE